

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bon Secour

*National Wildlife Refuge
Pine Beach Trail Guide*



This guide describes what one might see along one mile of the Pine Beach Trail, from the trailhead parking lot to the bridge over the mouth of Gator Lake. Many of the flowering plants will be difficult to locate or identify when not in bloom and are marked with an asterisk(*). Fall is the most colorful bloom period.

Raccoon, opossum, red fox, coyote, alligator, river otter, rabbit, armadillo, flying squirrel, and bobcat, the most common animals, are largely nocturnal, but may leave their tracks along the trail. In the daylight you are apt to see Six-lined Racerunner, gray squirrel, and birds.

1. Counterclockwise around island in the center of the parking lot.

Live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) supports a flowering plant **Spanish moss** (*Tillandsia usneoides*), used for furniture stuffing in the past.

Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) broad-leaved evergreen.



American holly

Atlantic white cedar
(*Chamaecyparis thyoides*)

American holly (*Ilex opaca*)

Pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*) In the past many hickory trees were cut for smoking mullet; this large one survived.

Blueberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*)
Several species of Blueberries (*Vaccinium*) and Huckleberries (*Gaylussacia*) are found along the trail, difficult to identify species. The other most common one is *Vaccinium elliottii* which can be recognized by the green stems of the newer growth.

Wild olive (*Osmanthus americanus*)
Small tree with leathery leaves. Inconspicuous fragrant blossoms in late winter/early spring, similar to cultivated osmanthus, Tea Olive. Small olive-like fruit in fall.

At Gate

Laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*)

Sand pine (*Pinus clausa*)
This short-needle pine is at the western limit of its range, which extends along the coast into the western panhandle of Florida, and is the Choctawhatchee sub-species. The Ocala Sand pine grows in central Florida.

Muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*)
A wild grape vine.

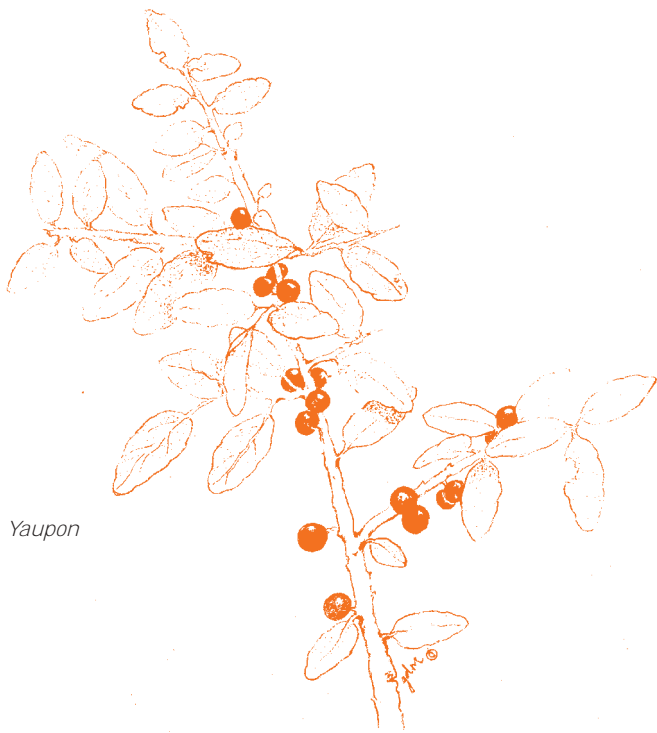
***Red basil** (*Calamintha coccinea*)
A small shrub with opposite small leaves. Red flowers in fall attract hummingbirds.

Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)
Spring flowers supply nectar for bees. Wildlife eats fruit in fall.

2. Starting on Right

***Beauty berry** (*Callicarpa americana*) Deciduous shrub with clusters of bright maroon berries along stem in late summer/fall, which are relished by birds.

Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) Numerous shrubs with light bark, shiny small leaves, red berries in fall and winter. Birds eat berries.



Yaupon

Wild olive (*Osmanthus americanus*)
Small tree behind Yaupon. See no. 1.

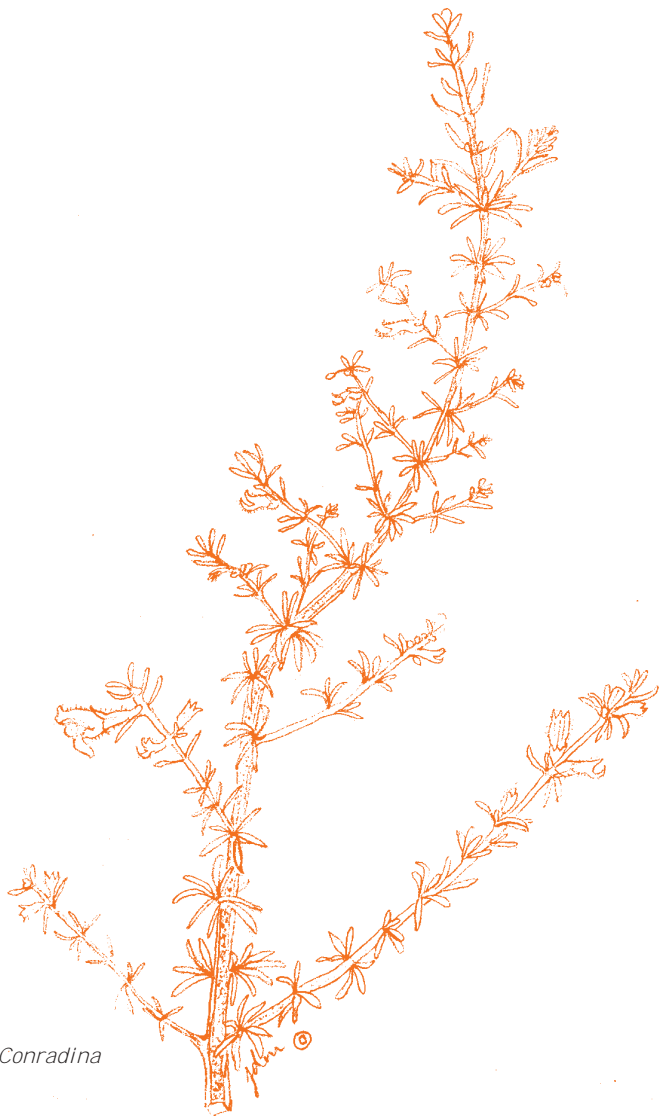
3. *Deer tongue/Vanilla plant
(*Carphephorus odoratissimus*) Basal rosette of tongue-shaped leaves. Lavendar blossoms on tall stems in fall.

Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)
Green fronds turn brown in fall.



Bracken fern

***Coral bean** (*Erythrina herbacea*)
Down road on left side. Spiny stems
with three-lobed deciduous leaves.
Spike of tubular red flowers in spring;
pod displaying toxic red beans in fall.



Conradina

4. *False foxglove

(*Aureolaria flava*) Long arching stems with tubular yellow flowers in late summer/fall. Parasitic on roots of oaks. Turns black when picked.

Gopher apple (*Licania michauxii*)

Colonial evergreen 8"-10" high along both sides of the road. Extensive underground roots. Creamy white flowers in spring; pinkish "apple" in late summer.

5. Seaside rosemary

(*Ceratiola ericoides*)

Shrub with bright green six-ranked needle-like foliage (look down a stem).

Conradina (*Conradina canescens*)

Smaller than the *Ceratiola*. Locally called **Rosemary** but neither this nor the above are the herb used in cooking. These leaves have a grayish cast and do not line up down the stem. Common. Lavendar to white flowers in late winter; a few blossoms may be found at other times.

Sand live oak (*Quercus geminata*)

Common. Oblong leaves have edges rolled under. On beach shaped by wind and drifting sands.

Myrtle oak (*Quercus myrtifolia*)

Common small, scrubby oak with variable obovate leaves.

Sand pine (*Pinus clausa*)

Short needle pine at western edge of its limited coastal range. Here the Choctawhatchee sub-species. The Ocala sub-species is found in central Florida.

6. Slash pine (*Pinus elliotti*)

Large long needled pine across road. Grows in wet as well as well drained sites. Widely planted in timberlands.

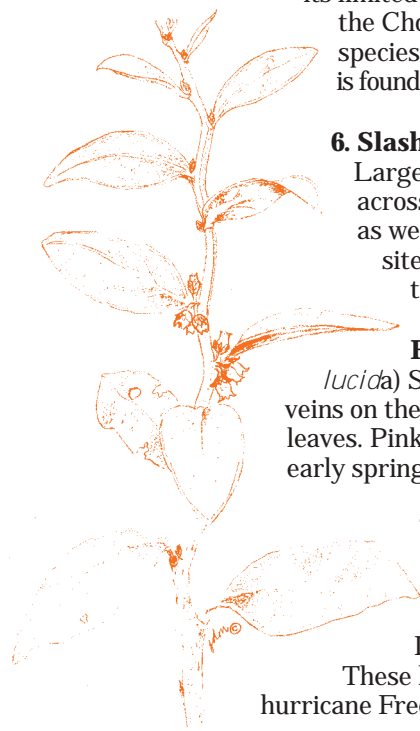
Fetterbush (*Lyonia*

lucida) Shrub with raised veins on the edges of leathery leaves. Pink urn-like flowers in early spring, persistent nutlets.

7. Bald cypress

(*Taxodium distichium*) In swamp across road. Deciduous conifer.

These have grown since hurricane Fredric in 1979.



Fetterbush



Redbay

Titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*)

Large shrub with dangling raceme of white flowers in spring.

***Duck potato** (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

Aquatic clump of long leaves with white flowers.

***Beggartick/Bur marigold**

(*Bidens mitis*) Yellow cosmos-like yellow flowers in fall.

8. Buttonbush

(*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Deciduous shrub with opposite leaves, globose white flower in summer; fruit is persistent brown, round head.

Redbay (*Persea palustris*)

Across road in front of dead pine.

Small tree usually with galls on

leaves. To the left, **Sweet bay**

(*Magnolia virginiana*) Common tree

in wetlands, noticeable in a breeze

because of the lighter undersides of

the leaves. Spring flower is like a

small Southern magnolia.

Waxmyrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)

Large shrub with aromatic leaves and in the fall along stems, small wax coated fruit which were once a source of wax for candles.

9. Reindeer Moss

(*Caldonia rangifera*) Sponge-like. Brittle when dry; soft when damp.

***Jointweed** (*Polygonella polygama*)

A small perennial with racemes of feathery white flowers in the fall.

Conradina. See no. 5.

10. Bitter gallberry/Inkberry

(*Ilex glabra*) Shrub to right. Small white flowers in spring provide nectar for bees. Black berry in fall.

Corkwood (*Stillingia aquatica*)

Slender shrub growing in the grassy wetland. A Euphorbia here at the western limit of its range.

Dahoon/Swamp holly

(*Ilex cassine*) Small trees with dull green leaves varying in length from 1.5 to 10 cm. Dull berries, usually red in fall/winter. Numerous on both sides of the road. At no. 11 notice the variety of leaf sizes and forms.

***Ragweed** (*Ambrosia*

artemisiifolia) This, not goldenrod, is the most common source of fall hay-fever inducing pollens.

11. Groundsel/Silverling

(*Baccharis halimnifolia*) Shrub to left of post. White hairy flowers in fall. Monarch butterflies gather on these during fall migration in mid-October.

Chinese tallowtree/Popcorn tree

(*Sapium sebiferum*) Aggressive, alien. Spring flowers attract bees. Spade shaped leaves have brilliant fall color. White, toxic, popcorn-like

fruits are eaten and seeds spread by birds. Trees grow in wet areas and are a nuisance in agricultural damage.

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)
Small trees to the north across road. Leaves usually have black spot, deciduous. Edible fruit in fall, but don't eat until soft ripe. Behind the persimmon is a rare yellow-berried **Dahoon**. Across from the number post is a weeping form of the Dahoon.

12. Scrub Myrtle and Live oaks.
See no. 5.

Blueberries/Huckleberries.
See no. 1.

13. Debris line from hurricane Frederic, September 12, 1979. Contains decaying remains of houses that once stood on the beach in Gulf Shores.

***Beauty berry.**
See no. 2.

14. Hairy wicky (*Kalamia hirsuta*)
Down side trail. Rare small shrub with hairy leaves, pink Mountain laurel like blossom. Difficult to locate.

15. Saw grass
(*Cladium jamaicense*) Can grow as high as 3 meters. Run fingers down blade to see why named Saw grass.

Winged sumac (*Rhus copallina*)
Small tree, deciduous; compound leaves turn red in fall. Reddish clusters of fruit persist. Nonpoisonous.

Slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*)
Note cat-face scar on lower trunk where this tree was tapped by the turpentine industry.

On The Bridge

Stand on the bridge and look up at the trunks of the pine trees on the NW side. Notice scars made by floating debris in Hurricane Fredric.

Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) The tallest reed around Gator Lake.

Needle rush/ Black rush (*Juncus roemarianus*) Most common "grass" in the brackish marshes, around shore of the Little Lagoon.

Please return unwanted brochures to recycle mailbox at trailhead.

For further information, contact:
Refuge Manager
Bon Secour
National Wildlife Refuge
12295 State Hwy. 180
Gulf Shores, Alabama 36542
251/540 7720



Drawings by:
Jill McArthur

Sawgrass

Bon Secour
National Wildlife Refuge
12295 State Highway 180
Gulf Shores, Alabama 36542
251/540 7720
bonsecour@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD

November 2002

